



Lar'shi Variants

House Rules for new Tau variants

By Gary Carney, with help from Frank O'Hanlon

The following stats and rules are completely unofficial and are just my take on a few Tau ship tweaks.

This article introduces two new variants of the Kor'vattra's first true warship, the Lar'shi (Hero) class. The first variant hails originally from the proud Shas (Fire) Caste Sept of Sa'cea, where the long-standing co-operation and mutual understanding between the Shas and Kor (Air) Castes has worked to maximize the combat potential facilitated by the modular construction of the Lar'shi. The result is the first true Tau battlecruiser, a vessel primarily designed for ship-to-ship duels and fleet engagements, relying on other elements of the fleet for Barracuda protection and in turn providing its fire support to Manta-bearing vessels taking part in a planetary assault. The second variant of the Lar'shi is a product of the esteemed Fio (Earth) Caste of Fal'shia, where the gradual retirement of the Gal'leath created a need for a vessel with increased attack craft capability - and the examples of the Dictator and Mars in the Gue'vattra (Imperial Navy) led to a similar configuration of the Lar'shi. This vessel has much reduced firepower compared with other Lar'shi variants, but its ability to launch additional Mantas and Barracudas serves as a boon to fleets where the larger Gal'leath is lacking - or in providing ordnance support to a smaller Qath'fannor formation in operations where an Or'es El'leath is not deployed.

I wished to create these variants almost as soon as I first got my hands on my first Lar'shi, back when the Specialist Games fleet was still the new kid on the block! (It is still hard to imagine that it has been such a while since I was arguing on the old SG forum over the Armada fleet list...) The modular construction, a major component of the Kor'vattra Ileath'fannor's starship development, had been explored to some extent by the list, but it seemed obvious that a Kor'el - alongside his/her Shas'el friend, of course - looking through the portal of an orbital

orbital dock at Sa'cea at a Lar'shi in orbit, and well aware of the myriad of configurations seen on Navy warships, would see the potential evident in switching those launch bays with more railguns!

Similarly, there is a 250+ year gap between the advent of the Lar'shi and the Kor'or'vesh project (in other words, the development of the Qath'fannor - the Commerce Protection Fleet) in which the Lar'shi would see significant action against the enemies of the tau'va, in a Kor'vattra seeing the decline of the Gal'leath in active service (I would say that in at least a few Septs, they are becoming quite rare indeed) and in need of a more dedicated carrier in the interim between the winding down of Gal'leath production and the advent of the Or'es El'leath. Also, the latter ship is still a relatively rare ship, not deployed in smaller operations - where the Gal'leath would have been able to provide significant ordnance support in Ileath'fannor fleets. So, the creation of a carrier variant of the Lar'shi seemed a logical choice for both the old and new Tau fleets. The choice of Fal'shia was a logical one - this advanced Sept would be most likely to ditch the older vessels and invest heavily in both the Lar'shi and the Qath'fannor ships - and thus need a cruiser-carrier which can handle itself in a fleet engagement!

So, without further ado, here are the variants:

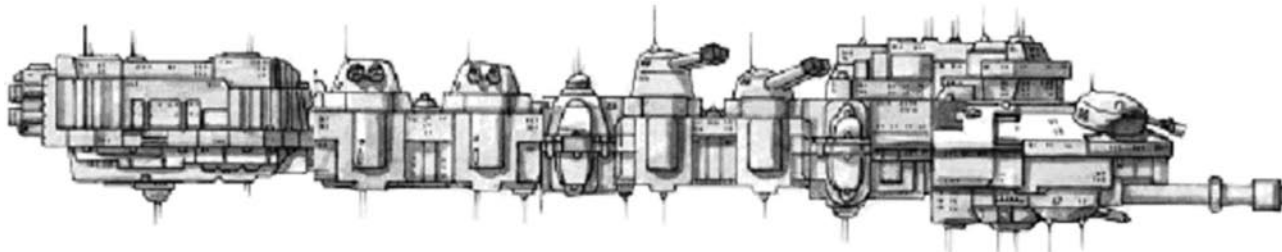
(Please note that the variants are available to any Tau fleet. Each variant is 0-1 per regular Lar'shi configuration in an Armada and Ileath'fannor fleet, and 0-1 per Lar'shi'vre or regular Lar'shi in a Qath'fannor fleet. In each case, the ships count as a regular Lar'shi for fleet restriction purposes)



LAR'SHI (HERO) CLASS STARSHIP, SA'CEA CONFIGURATION

In the centuries following the initial deployment of the Lar'shi, it has proved itself to be a very useful cruiser, capable of successfully engaging many starships of a similar displacement. While it lacks the sheer firepower of the Lunar class its designers were originally inspired by, its launch bay capability provide it with a tactical flexibility lacking from that class. However, it was clear to the Kor'ar'tol of more militarised Septs, such as Sa'cea and Vior'la, that the Ileath'fannor lacked a vessel with the kind of offensive firepower found in rival Imperial battlecruisers.

Taking advantage of the Lar'shi's modular construction, prototypes of a variant eschewing the original Lar'shi's launch bays for additional railgun turrets were created, the reasoning being that the fleet would need a more powerful ship of the line more than another means of deploying Hunter Cadres to a planetary surface - a capability the Ileath'fannor is not lacking. The resultant vessel proved most useful in fleet engagements and ship-to-ship duels, finding a place in Ileath'fannor formations used to shield colonisation/invasion naval assets. With the advent of the more dedicated Qath'fannor, the Sa'cea variant has found a more permanent niche in the Tau armed forces, as a dangerous opponent to those who challenge the tau'va.



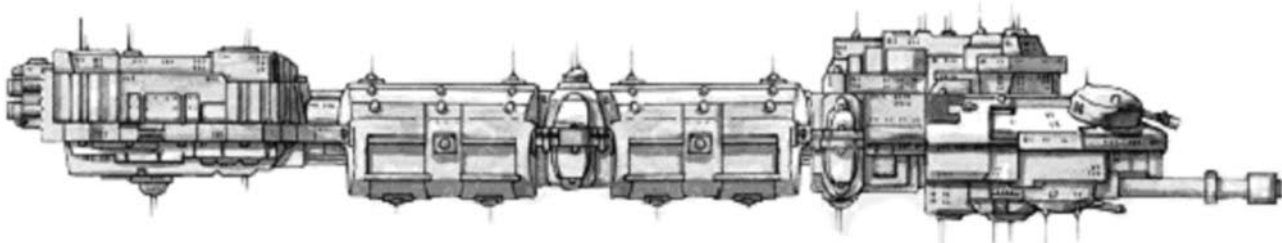
LAR'SHI (HERO) CLASS, SA'CEA.....200 points					
TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/8	20cm	45	2	5+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED		FIREPOWER/STR	
Prow Gravitic Launcher		20-40cm		6	
Prow Railgun Battery		45cm		4	
Port Ion Cannon		30cm		2	
Starboard Ion Cannon		30cm		2	
Port Railgun Battery		45cm		4	
Starboard Railgun Battery		45cm		4	

Notes: All Lar'shi class vessels are fitted with a prow deflector to raise their frontal armour to 6. This is disabled if the ship suffers a Prow critical hit.

LAR'SHI (HERO) CLASS STARSHIP, FAL'SHIA CONFIGURATION

Prior to the Kor'or'vesh, the problem of finding a suitable replacement for the ageing Gal'leath proved a taxing one for the Fio of the industrious Sept of Fal'shia. It was postulated that the Lar'shi hull - which was earning a considerable reputation across the Empire - may eventually provide the basis of a new range of starships, filling the void left by the retirements of the Gal'leath in the interim period before development of a new battleship-sized vessel.

This variant of the Lar'shi is equipped with more Launch Bays than a standard configuration model, sacrificing a portion of its firepower for the ability to provide additional support to fleets lacking the presence of a Gal'leath - or in engagements where deployment of one was deemed inappropriate. Also, as a means of enhancing its role as a command vessel for Kor'vattra battlegroups, this vessel type became the first Tau capital ship to possess the kind of superior electronics suite as the Skether'qan escort, laying the groundwork for the use of such technology in the Or'es El'leath starship class. With the advent of the Or'es El'leath, the role a Fal'shia variant Lar'shi would play in a significant Tau fleet engagement has diminished, yet the class may still be found in service, mostly in operation in the Fal'shia Sept itself.



LAR'SHI (HERO) CLASS, FAL'SHIA200 points					
TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/8	20cm	45	2	5+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED		FIREPOWER/STR	
Prow Gravitic Launcher		20-40cm		6	
Prow Railgun Battery		45cm		4	
Port Launch Bay		Barracudas: 25cm/Mantas: 20cm		2	
Starboard Launch Bay		Barracudas: 25cm/Mantas: 20cm		2	

Notes: All Lar'shi class vessels are fitted with a prow deflector to raise their frontal armour to 6. This is disabled if the ship suffers a Prow critical hit. The Fal'shia configuration is equipped with a Tracking System.

Kor'ar'tol Tactical Analysis

The Sa'cea variant lends itself to fleet engagements, where its heavy firepower can be used to maximum effect. Unlike other Tau capital ships, it can provide reasonably effective broadsides (more akin to the Demiurg commerce vessels in that regard), allowing a Tau player to use the ship as a line-breaker, although it is still most fearsome when its ion cannon and railguns are focussed in the front arc – a Skether'qan or Or'es El'leath will allow your Kor'el or Kor'o to maximize this ability at range.

Against ordnance-heavy fleets, it is relatively vulnerable, as it cannot provide for its own Barracuda support, but most lleath'fannor fleets are not lacking in attack craft ordnance! In a Qath'fannor fleet, it can serve as an anvil to the Lar'shi'vres' hammers – as well as serving as a useful accompaniment to an Or'es El'leath in larger battles.

The Fal'shia variant may seem as a less obvious choice in an lleath'fannor fleet. After all, the Gal'leaths are an ample source of attack craft... However, if you wish to construct a fleet around the notion that the Gal'leath is a relatively rare starship in your preferred Sept, this variant fills the role of interim fleet carrier – think of it as part of the impetus for the Kor'or'vesh development.

Of course, a Qath'fannor fleet of 1000 points or less can't take an Or'es El'leath, so the Fal'shia variant is ironically more useful

in providing Barracuda squadrons and Mantas to smaller games! It is less capable of holding its own in a firefight, so care should be taken not to expose it to the wrath of the enemy guns...

Kor'ar'tol Strategic Recommendations (aka conclusion...)

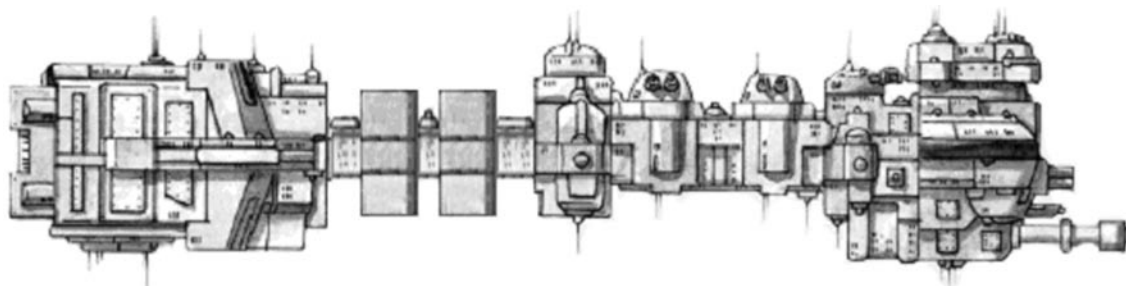
This article is intended to showcase the modular nature of the metal Kor'vattra ships, one of the reasons why, despite the advent of the new generation of Tau starships in the Qath'fannor, the Tau Empire will not rush to replace the venerable Lar'shi just yet! Also, it serves to show the use of that handy Tau booster pack!

Of course, the Lar'shi is not the only starship which could be similarly modified – one of the true strengths of the Tau fleet is the ease at which it can be adjusted to fit the various stages of the Empire's technological development, allowing re-fights of historic campaigns (especially since the relatively static nature of much of the rest of the 40K universe means similar modifications aren't necessary for Ork or Imperial ships!)

Indeed, one such example is a missile-variant Il'fannor (which would have use for the new missile modules in the Tau booster):

IL'FANNOR (MERCHANT) CLASS STARSHIP, D'YANOI CONFIGURATION

Before the development of the Gal'leath Mark XXIV, before the advent of the Kir'qath and Lar'shi class of starships, the Kor'vattra relied on the venerable Il'fannor hull as a launch platform for its missile ordnance. The D'yanoi configuration converted the space taken up on other configurations by grav hooks or ion cannon to store ammunition for its Gravitic Launcher. While the class proved mostly adequate against the Orks, it soon proved to be found wanting when faced with the Imperial Navy's ships of the line. With the development of the Lar'shi and Kir'qath, it was deemed that the Il'fannor could better serve the Kor'vattra in either its original or its Dal'yth configuration, and the D'yanoi configuration vessels were eventually phased out of active service, almost all converted to another combat type. Notably, however, the type saw considerable service as part of D'yanoi's hard-pressed space assets during its long isolation from the tau'va, and the type is fondly remembered – indeed, still in limited service - by the Tau of that Sept.



IL'FANNOR (MERCHANT) CLASS STARSHIP, D'YANOI105 points (+15 for extra 2HP)					
TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/4	15cm	45	1	5+	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED		FIREPOWER/STR	
Prow Gravitic Launcher		20-40cm		4	
Prow Railgun Battery		45cm		2	
Port Railgun Battery		45cm		2	
Starboard Railgun Battery		45cm		2	
				FIRE ARC	
				Front	
				Left/Front/Right	
				Left/Front	
				Front/Right	

Sadly, the booster doesn't come with a Gravitic launcher, so I'd chop up a rail rifle from a Pathfinder and mount it on the D'yanoi's hull – if you wanted to try it out in a historical campaign, that is...

I hope that you have use for the above vessels in your Kor'vattra - of whichever edition - and please post any comments, advice, criticism etc at GothiComms, or at the BFG Specialist Games board.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I have been a fan of the 40K universe for the past eleven years. These days, my primary focus has been in Epic and Battlefleet Gothic, contributing to the Eldar and Tau development in Epic Armageddon and the various Tau fleet projects in BFG. I am also working on the Gue'senshi army list for Epic, currently in development at EpiComms.